

# PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Douglas F. Smith, Chairman  
Board of Education

Kenneth R. Di Pietro  
Superintendent of Schools

February 21, 2017

To Members of the State Legislature:

It is my understanding that the State Legislature will review the Governor's proposed FY 2017/2018 budget inclusive of the budget for Education. The most recent report to our district is that Plainfield will lose over \$1.4 Million not including Special Education Excess Aid grants which are proposed to be folded into a new category for education aid.

I must report that such a loss of State aid to Plainfield would be devastating to our educational programs and services to a community which has increased poverty from 29% to 51% over the last five (5) years.

Despite our economic challenges, Plainfield serves as one of the municipalities which is beating the odds in student achievement. Our data shows that Plainfield increased student achievement on State testing and has increased graduation rates and college acceptance. All of this has been accomplished without status or additional grant funding awarded to Alliance schools.

There are three (3) specific reasons I ask the State Legislature to challenge the Governor's proposed budget cuts to education aid:

1. A significant reduction or increase to a school district's state aid requires two to five (2-5) years of planning in order to effectively translate funding resources into instructional improvements. A district scheduled to receive an additional \$1 million would need to define targeted, researched-based, strategies and secure high performing staff to achieve improvements. A district scheduled to lose \$1 million would simply lose programming, increase class size, and discontinue services.
2. Local taxpayers cannot and will not carry the burden of the loss of state aid. In many cases, such as Plainfield, a tax increase in excess of 1 mil has been rejected by the residents. A loss of more than \$2 million in State Aid in Plainfield, will result in taxpayer rejection and stalemate on establishing a new and appropriate local school budget.
3. Translating the burden of debt from the State to local municipalities, as in the case of teacher retirement, also translates the revenue for taxes from wage earning to property taxes which in the case of a district such as Plainfield is clearly a discriminatory practice. A residency facing 50% poverty absorbing costs related to a State retirement system and using property tax or rental costs unfairly places excess burden on smaller communities such as Plainfield.

I sincerely ask that you consider all factors when reviewing the Governor's proposed FY 2018 budget.

Sincerely,

Kenneth R. Di Pietro

Kenneth R. Di Pietro, Superintendent